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A STUDY OF LANIER'S POEMS.

A. Two themes welded in perfect harmony will tell the story of our poet's life, music and love. Music-born with him, descending to him by a long line of inheritance, his life-long passion; love, broad, catholic and unfathomable, the source of his real living and the key note of his character. Love, the core of his inmost being, the very marrow of his daily thought. Music, the flower of his daily life and the fittest utterance of his secret soul. By good right, too, could he lay claim to the gift of music. In the days of good Queen Bess, one Jerome Lanier, a Huguenot refugee had been kindly received in England and he repaid this kindness by giving to England's sovereign his talents and by bequeathing to her successors, James I. and the First Charles, the talents of his gifted son, Nicholas.

This Nicholas was diplomatist, painter and musical director. Another Nicholas Lanier, the son of this first Nicholas was a musician at the court of Charles II. and was the first president of the Society of Musicians, an organization formed "for the improvement of the science and the interest of the professors." The list of the charter members of this society contained the name of four other Laniers. The family history in America dates from 1716, when Thomas Lanier with others settled on a grant of land, which contained the present site of Richmond, Va.

Sidney Lanier's mother was Mary Anderson, of Virginia family and of Scotch descent. This family, the Andersons, was famed for its talent for oratory, poetry and music.

Of the union of these two lines, in both of which music had always been a heavenly gift, sprang Sidney Lanier. He was born on the third of February, 1842, at the present home of his father Robert S. Lanier, a lawyer of Macon, Ga. The boy's first appeal to unusual attention and the first cause he gave his relatives and friends for prophecies or forebodings was his talent, almost a frenzy, for music. This talent showed itself in his ability to play on every instrument with which he became acquainted—including the organ, the flute, the piano, the violin, the guitar,

the banjo. His frenzy he himself indicates when he tells us that later in his college days the violin-voice would sometimes so exalt him in rapture, that presently he would sink from his solitary music-worship into a deep trance, thence to awake, alone, on the floor of his room, sorely shaken in nerve. His father recognizing his passion for music and the mysterious and almost dangerous influence exerted on him by the plaintive violin note, encouraged him to substitute the flute. But this was with his father a compromise. He would gladly have seen his son give up music as an unmanly occupation, and he himself, for a time, felt this same misgiving about an art, which a generation ago was in this country considered effeminate. In 1860 he graduated with first honors from Oglethorpe College, a Presbyterian institution near Macon. In a letter written years afterwards, he alludes to "the uncongenial atmosphere of a farcical college," but in the last weeks of his life he avowed that he owed the strongest and most valuable stimulus of his life to Prof. James Woodrow, then a professor at Oglethorpe College, and now a distinguished editor, professor and divine in Columbia, S. C. However poor may have been the college, Lanier laid there the foundation of a superior education. Upon graduation he was appointed tutor. He spent the next months in the study of languages and philosophy and in writing verse. Worried in mind about the province of music and more deeply disturbed about his own life's work, he was called from his reveries and reflections by the rude noise of war. He enlisted at the age of nineteen and remained a private in spite of three offers of promotion, because promotion meant separation from his younger brother, Clifford. His first year's service was in no wise onerous, and he found much time to pursue his linguistic studies and for the solace of music. When he and his brother were transferred to the signal corps and were stationed at Petersburg, Va., he enjoyed the advantages of a small local library. Here in the midst of war a secret enemy declared battle—a battle to last fifteen years and end in Lanier's fall. Consumption, the dread delusive disease, made its first premonitions felt. The doctors told him afterwards that music had been his chief ally in his warfare, for the regular, full inspirations necessary to flute playing had prolonged his life. In due time the separation of the brothers came. Each was ordered to take charge of a vessel

and run the blockade. Sidney's was captured and he was imprisoned at Point Lookout. He was released in February, 1865, and on foot he made his weary way to his far Southern home. He carried with him his earthly possessions—a twenty dollar gold piece and some little effects, which had been taken from him, when he was captured, and his flute, which he had hidden in his sleeve and taken into prison with him. He reached Macon utterly exhausted and for six long weeks was desperately ill. The cloud of his own suffering was not so dark as that which passed over the early days of his convalescence when his beloved mother died of consumption.

Lanier arose from his bed with pronounced congestion of one lung. He hastened south to regain his health. In December, 1865, he accepted a clerkship in Montgomery, Ala., which he held until 1867. In the summer of 1867 he went to New York to arrange to have his only novel 'Tiger-Lilies,' published. This novel had been written in April of that year. ¹Ward, Lanier's appreciative and admiring biographer, to whom all students of Lanier's poems owe a debt of gratitude that they would gladly pay, were it possible, says:

"It is a luxuriant, unpruned work, written in haste for the press, within the space of three weeks, but one which gave rich promise of the poet."

In the fall of 1867, Lanier took charge of an Academy in Prattville, Ala. In December of the same year he was married to Miss Mary Day, of Macon, who in addition to being an ideally devoted wife was the inspiration of some of his best songs and the confessor to whom some of his most sacred secrets were revealed. In January, 1868, he suffered his first hemorrhage. He returned to Macon and began the study of law with his father. He practised until December, 1872. In this period he had sought health in New York, but in vain. He went to San Antonio in search of a permanent home. Disappointed he returned to Macon in April, 1873. Not yet had Lanier settled that question, which came to him in his college days, as to his life's work. The work of the last years had been unsatisfactory to the poet-spirit and his stifled yearnings for music and literature now became a

¹ It is unnecessary to say to those who have read Ward's Introduction to Scribner's 'Edition of Lanier's Poems,' that the brief biographical sketch, which I have felt it necessary to insert here as an essential prelude to my paper, is a digest of that graceful memorial. I acknowledge explicitly and with gladness a debt, which, it is too apparent, I cannot repay.

living, burning desire. He was fully aware of the precarious state of his health, he spoke of his death even, but he resolved to fight off the monster as long as possible, and to fill the intervening years with consecrated devotion to music and letters. Equipped with flute and pen his only weapons in his intense struggle against poverty and death, he turned his face toward the north—to some point where he might enjoy the companionship of books and an “atmosphere of art.” In describing this longing he wrote later to his literary friend and patron, Bayard Taylor:

“I could never describe to you what a mere drought and famine my life has been, as regards that multitude of matters, which I fancy one absorbs when one is in an atmosphere of art, or when one is in conversational relation with men of letters, with travellers, with persons, who have either seen, or written, or done large things. Perhaps you know that with us of the younger generation in the South since the war, pretty much the whole of life has been merely not dying.”

After spending a few months in New York, Lanier in December, 1873, procured an engagement as first flute in the Peabody Symphony Concerts in Baltimore. To his practical and devoted father this move seemed unwise, and he urged his son to come back to Macon. To this request the son's answer is pathetically conclusive:

“My dear father” he writes in the body of his letter, “think how for twenty years, through pain, through weariness, through sickness, through the uncongenial atmosphere of a farcical college and of a bare army, and then of an exacting business life, through all the discouragement of being wholly unacquainted with literary people and literary ways—I say, think how in spite of all these depressing circumstances and of a thousand more which I could enumerate, these two figures of music and poetry have steadily kept in my heart so that I could not vanish them. Does it not seem to you as to me, that I begin to have the right to enroll myself among the devotees of these two sublime arts, after having followed them so long and so humbly and through so much bitterness.”

This the father seems to have received as the final word upon his plan, and it was by the assistance of his father and brother that he was kept from abject poverty. But even with such help as they could render, his was a pitiable case, for his wife and babes must be fed, hunger must be kept from his own door, and yet he could find little time for serious toil between the frequent recurring hemorrhages. In May, 1874, he visited

Florida. On his return, while at Sunnyside, he wrote his poem "Corn," which attracted to the writer many admirers and won him the unfailing friendship of Bayard Taylor. He was busy in the next years reading and writing. In 1876, he was in West Chester, Pa.; later he returned with his family to Baltimore, but was compelled by the state of his health to go to Florida. In the following spring he returned to Georgia, thence to Pennsylvania, thence to Baltimore.

During the winters of 1877-78 and 1878-79, Lanier gave first a course of lectures on Elizabethan verse, and later a more ambitious course on Shakespeare. On his birthday in 1879, he received from President Daniel C. Gilman, of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, formal notice of his appointment in this institution as lecturer on English Literature for the following year. The *honorarium* attached to this lectureship was the first definite income that Lanier had received since he gave up the principalship of the Prattville Academy. When his appointment as lecturer at Johns Hopkins was made known to him, he had just been through a severe illness accompanied as was usual now by a hemorrhage. He spent six weeks in the summer of 1879, at the Rockbridge Alum Springs, and during this time began and completed his volume on the 'Science of English Verse,' one of the most suggestive, if not the most satisfactory, treatises yet written on this difficult and unsettled subject. In spite of illness near to death during the winter of 1879-80,

"he attended continuous rehearsals at the Peabody, gave weekly ten lectures upon English Literature, two of them public at the University, two of them to University classes and the other six at private schools,"

and besides all this wrote a number of poems. In May, 1880, the beginning of the end was evident. With his wife and her father he went for the summer to West Chester, Pa., where his fourth son was born. The fall climate there was too severe and he returned in September to Baltimore. From now on he waged a face to face battle with death, but with no thought of surrender. In December he was nearly overcome. In February he ventured out of doors, as a test of his ability to deliver his second course of lectures at the University. Ward says:

"His improvement ceased on that first day of exposure. Nevertheless by April, he had gone through the twelve lectures

(there were to have been twenty), which were later published under the title 'The English Novel.' A few of the earlier lectures he penned himself; the rest he was obliged to dictate to his wife. With the utmost care of himself going in a closed carriage and sitting during his lectures, his strength was so exhausted that the struggle for breath in the carriage on his return seemed each time to threaten the end. Those who heard him listened with a sort of fascinated terror, as in doubt whether the hoarded breath would suffice to the end of the hour."

"Sunrise," the last of his poems (save one rhymed note of thanks) was written, when he was too feeble to lift his food to his mouth, and with a fever-temperature of one hundred and four.

—till yonder beside thee
My soul shall float, friend Sun,
The day being done.

He was passing through the shadows of the declining day. In April, 1881, he was in New York making arrangements with the Scribners for the appearance of some of his books for boys. In May, his brother Clifford came and Lanier was carried to a point near Asheville, N. C., where camping out was to be tried. No improvement came and early in August they moved to Lynn, Polk Co., N. C. Clifford visited him there and believing him better, returned home. His father and his father's wife left five days later, with the intention of returning soon. Mrs. Lanier's words tell the story's end:

"We are left alone" (August 29th) "with one another. On the last night of the summer comes a change. His love and immortal will held off the destroyer of our summer yet one more week, until the forenoon of September 7th, and then falls the frost, and the unfaltering will renders its supreme submission to the adored will of God."

B. As we turn from his life, his outer life—gentle, courteous, chivalrous, submissive—to his inner life, and to his published volume of poems, wherein that inner life is best revealed, let us endeavor to discover some characteristics of this poet's mind, and trace the subtle means of its expression. In taking the measure of a man's true worth, we know much if we can determine his conception of God and His revelations, of his fellow-man and of himself. Lanier has answered in his life and in his letters, many of the momentous questions that naturally arise from these relations.

When I read in the "Marshes of Glynn,"

"Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing—with holding and free

Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain,"

I recall how his soul had expanded in love of God until a "catholic man," he was no longer in perfect sympathy with the strict, religious, discipline to which his early years had been subjected, nor could he submit with resignation to the chafing limitations of denominational lines, but his faith in God was not shaken.

"As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God;
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn."

Even more surely than in the greatness of God did Lanier rest in His love, and it was his lofty conception of this that made him record his "Remonstrance" against opinion and its creeds and mandates. With an intense earnestness this forcible protest ends,

"I would thou left'st me free, to live with love,
And faith, that through the love of love doth find
My Lord's dear presence in the stars above,
The clods below, the flesh without, the mind
Within, the bread, the tear, the smile.
Opinion, damned Intriguer, gray with guile,
Let me alone."

In the beautiful ballad of "Trees and the Master," we have a clear indication of Lanier's recognition of the Christ-man, while in the stronger poem the "Crystal," we have a still more elaborate view of this conception.

"But Thee, but Thee, O sovereign Seer of time,
But Thee, O poets' Poet, Wisdom's Tongue,
But Thee, O man's best Man, O love's best Love,
O perfect life in perfect labor writ,
O all men's Comrade, Servant, King, or Priest,—
What *if* or *yet*, what mole, what flaw, what lapse,

What least defect or shadow of defect,
 What rumor, tattled by an enemy,
 Of inference loose, what lack of grace
 Even in torture's grasp or sleep's, or death's,—
 Oh, what amiss may I forgive in Thee,
 Jesus, good Paragon, Thou Crystal Christ?"

Time and again Lanier reverts to *love* as the means by which God is to be apprehended, and it is through this medium of love that he sees God revealed in all nature. Nowhere is Lanier's poetic instinct more apparent than in his interpretation of Nature's phenomena. With all the sensibility of an open-hearted man, he receives the impressions of nature, but through her phases and appearances he sees a deeper thought, a more mysterious and mighty truth. The Clover on which the browsing Ox is feeding may mean to Lanier the great men of earth consumed by Course of Time. Corn is a fit emblem of the true poet, and mirrors the coveted contentment. The Mocking Bird interprets all the songs, the dreams, the passion-plays of birds. The bee is the poet that comes to the world-flower with "starry stuff about his wings." Of the melancholy dove he sings;

"Nay if ye three, O Morn! O Spring! O Heart!
 Should chant grave unisons of grief and love;
 Ye could not mourn with more melodious art
 Than daily doth yon dim sequestered dove."

A pet mocking bird killed by a cat suggests the cat-like Death that slew Keats, who set all Heaven's words in rhyme. From the "Marshes of Glynn" quotations have already been made, and it would be easy to multiply these until the most sceptical would recognize not only Lanier's deep and appreciative observation of nature, but the poet-spirit of his own deep soul, which he found continually mirrored in her face.

In the quiet, peaceful description of a "Florida Sunday," his appreciation of nature is throughout interwoven with his confidence in God. Identifying himself with nature in all its phenomena, he writes:

"I am ye,
 And ye myself; yea, lastly, Thee,
 God, whom my roads all reach, howe'er they run,
 My Father, Friend, Belovèd, dear All-One,
 Thee in my soul, my soul in Thee, I feel,
 Self of myself."

or

"And I am one with all the kinsmen things
That e'er my Father fathered."

It goes without saying that this oneness with all created things was in no wise forgotten or left out of sight in our poet's conception of his fellowmen. With them in all stations and everywhere he stands in a union of closest kinship and unyielding love. In his one novel he had written in his remarkable allegory, wherein War is compared to a plant, these words:

"Friends and horticulturists . . . if war was ever right then Christ was always wrong; and war-flowers and the vine of Christ grow different ways, insomuch that no man may grow with both."

Lanier grew with the vine of Christ and his nature, formed of love, could brook no discord between man and man. Opinion which set men in hostility over against each other was hated; and vice of every kind, by which evil and enmity entered the world, was the legitimate subject of his attack. Into the alembic, where seethe the selfishness, the crimes, the hates of the world, he pours love as the pacific constituent. Of many a troublesome problem did he feel:

"Vainly might Plato's brain revolve it;
Plainly the heart of a child could solve it."

There seemed to be no limits to the breadth of his love. In his beautiful "Symphony" the violins breathe "we're all for love," and the flute in its velvet note whispers "I'm for heart."

"The Time needs heart, 'tis tired of head."

In this one poem he utters his burning protest against the heartlessness of trade, urges the universal application of the command, 'Love thy Neighbor,' almost shrieks the bitterness of merchantable love and sighs for nobler wooing, pleads for a maidenly purity in man and sums up all life in a fugue, whereof the ever recurring theme is Love.

From beginning to end of his volume of poems, his abiding interest in his fellowman and his comprehensive love are on every page revealed. When he looks into the "shining gray" of his wife's eyes, a love that links God and man is fixed in his tender verse. As he leans over his sleeping child, a magic tenderness is crystallized in a poetic vow of fatherly love. Grandfather and grandmother stand under an arch whose gold

is refined by the power of love. His heart goes out to friendly patron, master of music, interpreter of art, to students, to sweet ministering maidens, to earth's oppressed and to all aspiring. Wherever his poetry reaches, it breathes an aroma of tender gentleness and care, and woos to higher life and higher loving. No quarter, save that which heavenly mercy dictates, could he give to any vice or evil deed. His standard of morality was high and fixed. He stood as the avowed champion of virtue and the open enemy of vice. The ethical purpose of his writings were too clearly defined, were it not the simple, prevailing purpose of his daily life. But Lanier was no preacher of a code of morals, which he did not recognize as binding on himself. Indeed he was more exacting with himself than with his fellow-man, because he did not divorce talent and responsibility, and he of all men best knew his own high talent. In 1873, he wrote from Baltimore to his father :

"Several persons from whose judgment in such matters there can be no appeal, have told me, for instance, that I am the greatest flute player in the world ; and several others of equally authoritative judgment have given me an almost equal encouragement to work with my pen,"

and then he hastens to add in parenthesis

"Of course I protest against the necessity which makes me write such things about myself. I only do so because I so appreciate the love and tenderness, which prompt you to desire one with you, etc."

A little later he writes to his wife :

"So many great ideas for Art are born to me each day, I am swept away into the land of All-Delight, by their strenuous sweet whirlwind ; and I find within myself such entire, yet humble, confidence of possessing every single element of power to carry them all out, save the little paltry sum of money that would suffice to keep me clothed and fed in the meantime. I do not understand this."

But Lanier was no visionary egotist. From his early youth he had been a great reader and a general student. He had availed himself of the opportunity to read in Petersburg, Va., and he had revelled in the greater advantages offered by the libraries of Baltimore. He enumerates as his sweetest masters Dante, Keats, Chopin, Raphael, Lucretius, Omar, Angelo. Beethoven, Chaucer, Schubert, Shakespeare, Bach and Buddha.

What a strange medley of names and yet how significant of Lanier's sweep and sympathies of mind! In another poem ("The Crystal") with critical acumen and admirable discrimination he shows his familiarity with Homer, Socrates, Buddha, Dante, Milton, Aeschylus, Lucretius, Aurelius, À Kempis, Epictetus, Behmen, Swedenborg, Langlande, Cædmon, Emerson, Keats and Tennyson. The names of Langlande and Cædmon give occasion to recall that not only was Lanier broadly read, and a man of a rich fund of knowledge gathered from all quarters by general reading, but he was an earnest, painstaking and diligent student. His knowledge of Old English, as exhibited by his translations and his remarks on pronunciation, etc., in his 'Science of English Verse,' show how seriously he had taken his self-imposed task, and how thoroughly he had accomplished his purpose of learning his mother tongue.

In criticising Poe he had said "The trouble with Poe was, he did not know enough." Lanier had determined not to fail for this reason and with an industry and perseverance almost inconceivable in a man, whose constant companion was the shadow of death, he toiled in accumulating stores and in developing his mind. He exacted of himself labor and sacrifice that another would have been rightly called a tyrant for exacting. In his studies for the 'Science of English Verse,' he read deeply and fully in the theory of sound, and was very much interested in experiments he himself was making with reference to sound-co-ordinations.

The same enthusiasm and zeal he showed in his studies, he exhibited in his editorship of books, his preparation of lectures and his rehearsals for the concerts. Since we will have to revert later to his musical knowledge, it is not out of place to record here the eulogy pronounced by the leader of the Peabody Symphony Orchestra, Asger Hamerik:

"To him as a child in his cradle. Music was given; the heavenly gift to feel and to express himself in tones. His human nature was like an enchanted instrument, a magic flute, or the lyre of Apollo, needing but a breath or a touch to send its beauty out into the world. It was indeed irresistible that he should turn with those poetical feelings which transcend language to the penetrating gentleness of the flute or the infinite passion of the violin; for there was an agreement, a spiritual correspondence between his nature and theirs, so that they mutually absorbed

and expressed each other. In his hands the flute no longer remained a mere material instrument but was transformed into a voice that set heavenly harmonies into vibration. Its tones developed colors, warmth and a low sweetness of unspeakable poetry; they were not only true and pure, but poetic, allegoric, as it were, suggestive of the depths and heights of being and of the delights which the earthly ear never hears and the earthly eye never sees. No doubt his firm faith in these lofty idealities gave him the power to present them to our imaginations and thus by the aid of the higher language of Music to inspire others with that sense of beauty, in which he constantly dwelt. His conception of music was not reached by an analytic study of note by note, but was intuitive and spontaneous; like a woman's reason; he felt it so, because he felt it so, and his delicate perception required no more logical form of reasoning. His playing appealed alike to the musically learned and to the unlearned, for he would magnetize the listener; but the artist felt in his performance the superiority of the momentary living inspiration to all the rules and shifts of mere technical scholarship. His art was not only the art of art, but an art above art. I will never forget the impression he made on me when he played the flute-concerto of Emil Hartmann at a Peabody Symphony Concert, in 1878; his tall, handsome, manly presence, his flute breathing noble sorrows, noble joys, the orchestra softly responding. The audience was spellbound. Such distinction, such refinement! He stood the master, the genius.'

However confident, the deep souled, divinely gifted Lanier, may have been of his genius in music he was no less certain of his power as a poet. To his wife he wrote:

"I will make to thee a little confession of faith, telling thee, my dearer self, in words, what I do not say to my not-so-dear-self except in more modest feeling. Know then, that disappointments were inevitable and will still come until I have fought the battle which every great artist has had to fight since time began. This—dimly felt while I was doubtful of my vocation and my powers—is clear as the sun to me now that I *know* through the fiercest tests of life, that I am in soul and shall be in life and utterance, a great poet."

He then recalls how other great artists have waited for the world's belated plaudits and concludes:

"Have then . . . no fears nor anxieties in my behalf; look upon all my disappointments as mere witnesses that art has no enemy so unrelenting as cleverness, and as rough weather that seasons timber. It is of little consequence whether *I* fail; the *I* in the matter is a small business. '*Que mon nom soit flétri, que la France soit libre!*' quoth Danton; which is to say, interpreted

by my environment; let my name perish—the poetry is good poetry and the music is good music, and beauty dieth not, and the heart that needs it will find it.”

And yet his was a noble conception of the poet and his creation. In the letter just read he classed himself with the great artist and the great artist he described in these words:

“For indeed, we may say that he who has not yet perceived how artistic beauty and moral beauty are convergent lines which run back into a common ideal origin, and who therefore is not afire with moral beauty just as with artistic beauty—that he, in short, who has not come to that stage of quiet and eternal frenzy in which the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty mean one thing, burn as one fire, shine as one light within him; he is not yet the great artist.”

or in words no less striking he speaks again to his student hearers:

“Cannot one say with authority to the young artist, whether working in stone, in color, in tones, or in character-forms of the novel; so far from dreading that your moral purpose will interfere with your beautiful creation, go forward in the clear conviction that unless you are suffused—soul and body, one might say—with that moral purpose which finds its largest expression in love; that is, the love of all things in their proper relation; unless you are suffused with this love, do not dare to meddle with beauty; unless you are suffused with beauty, do not dare to meddle with love [truth?]; unless you are suffused with truth, do not dare to meddle with goodness; in a word, unless you are suffused with truth, wisdom, goodness and love, abandon the hope that the ages will accept you as an artist.”

But the poet was to Lanier even more than one in whose mind rest “beauty of holiness” and “holiness of beauty”: or one suffused with “truth, wisdom, goodness and love,” for these might exist latent and unimpressed upon those around. See this picture of the poet:

“Look, out of line one tall corn-captain stands
Advanced beyond the foremost of his bands,
And waves his blades upon the very edge
And hottest thicket of the battling hedge.
Thou lustrous stalk, that ne’er mayst walk nor talk,
Still shalt thou type the poet-soul sublime
That leads the vanward of his timid time
And sings up cowards with commanding rhyme—
Soul calm, like thee, yet fain, like thee, to grow
By double increment, above, below;

Soul homely, as thou art, yet rich in grace like thee,—
 Teaching the yeomen selfless chivalry
 That moves in gentle curves of courtesy ;
 Soul filled like thy long veins with sweetness tense
 By every god-like sense
 Transmuted from the four wild elements.
 Drawn to high plans
 Thou lift'st more stature than a mortal man's,
 Yet ever piercest downward in the mould
 And keepest hold
 Upon the reverend and steadfast earth
 That gave thee birth ;
 Yea, standest smiling in thy future grave,
 Serene and brave.
 With unremitting breath
 Inhaling life from death,
 Thine epitaph writ fair in fruitage eloquent,
 Thyself thy monument."

Hang over against this picture of the poet its companion piece
 from his poem "The Bee":

"To thee
 Come I, a poet, hereward haply blown,
 From out another worldflower lately flown.
 Wilt ask, *What profit e'er a poet brings?*
 He beareth starry stuff about his wings
 To pollen thee and sting thee fertile ; nay,
 If still thou narrow thy contracted way,
 —Worldflower if thou refuse me—
 —Worldflower, if thou abuse me,
 And hoist thy stamen's spear-point high
 To wound my wing and mar mine eye—
 Nathless I'll drive me to thy deepest sweet,
 Yea, richlier shall that pain the pollen beat
 From me to thee, for oft these pollens be
 Fine dust from wars that poets wage for thee."

C. If we turn to the preface to Lanier's 'Science of Verse' we read these significant words :

"If Puttenham in the sixteenth century could wish to make the art of poetry "vulgar for all Englishmen's use," such a desire in the nineteenth must needs become a religious aspiration. For under our new dispensation the preacher must soon be a poet, as were the preachers before him under the old. To reach an audience of a variety so prodigious as to range from the agnostic to the devotee, no forms of less subtlety than those of tone can be effective. A certain wholly unconscious step already

made in this direction by society gives a confirmation of fact to this view which perhaps no argument can strengthen; I mean the now common use of music as a religious art. Music already occupies one end of the church; the same inward need will call poetry to the other."

Then dismissing the weak notion of poetry involved in its classification as polite literature, Lanier continues:

"That all worthy poets belong substantially to the School of David, that it is the poet's business to keep the line of men touching shoulders with each other, that the poet is in charge of all learning to convert it into wisdom and that therefore a treatise on the poet's method is in its last result a sort of disciplinary preparation and *magister choralis* for the congregation as well as for the preacher of the future—these will not be regarded as merely visionary propositions, and perhaps will be here accepted at least as giving a final unity to the principles now to be set forth."

We have outlined without satisfactory completeness, but it is hoped, with adequate suggestion, Lanier's qualifications of mind, heart, and body for the mighty rôle of poet. We have seen how, in his love of all creation and his yearning for the beautiful, the poetry of his nature was ever apparent. Even his bodily sufferings but chastened his heart and made him the more lovable, the more loving and the more beloved.

In breadth of sympathy, in intensity of love, in sublimity of thought, in the fullness of his artistic inspiration, in his heart-beat responsive to the throbbing of the great world-heart, in his deep desire for infinite revelations, in the sweet submissiveness of his will, in his firm reliance upon the All-Good, in the prophetic raptures awakened in him by Nature, I believe, in Lanier's own words, that in soul he was a great poet. When I think of his conception of life, his unswerving devotion to duty, his eagerness to know his brother-man in life or books, and his greater eagerness to bless all men's living; when I catch faint glimpses of his filial love, the unfathomable depth of his conjugal confidence, the patient tenderness of his fatherly heart; when in all the lengthening years of his intensest suffering I find but one slight plaint, and that unselfish, I am constrained to add in Lanier's words that he was a great poet in life.

Was he a great poet in utterance? Before answering this for ourselves, or summoning to our aid the critics' views, let us consider the dress, wherein he clothed his thought.

Lanier's earliest poems were conventional in form and largely so in sentiment. His first published poem was, "To—" (p. 222—1863²); the measure was according to usual notation Iambic tetrameter or, to use his own notation, it was three-rhythm and the metre consisted of four bars. The theme of this poem was love and the spirit hopeful. The "Wedding" (p. 223—1865), a kind of crude sonnet, with three-rhythm and of alternate four and three bars and then of four bars, is melancholy. The "Wedding Hymn" (p. 233—1865) in the rhythm of the first poem, is uneven and somewhat flat. The "Last Words of Stonewall Jackson" (p. 230—1865) consists of six verses of four lines each, three lines being of five bars and the fourth of three. In the same rhythm and without material variation from these forms are: the full-voweled, sonorous "Night" (p. 236—1866), with end-stopped lines; the freer poem "To Wilhelmina" (p. 232—1866) with run-on lines; the musical "Birthday Song" (p. 219—1866); the faintly poetic, "Night and Day" (p. 218—1866). "Strange Jokes" (p. 209—1867) is more whimsical both in metre and contents, though the rhythm is the same three time movement. The weird poem "In the Foam" (p. 234—1867) shows the first noticed example of improper rhyme, the words thwart: heart. This is the more worthy of notice, because our author is very clear in his discussion of rhyme and rarely fails to meet his own requirements.

In the first lines of the poem "Barnacles" (p. 235—1867) I detect what seems to me to be the first conscious use of alliteration, though this would be difficult to prove. In the long poem, the "Jacquerie" (p. 183), which bears the date 1868 but which was written probably at different times, we have several indications of his later skill. It begins with heroic verse in rhyme couplets but soon drops into heroic blank verse with occasional internal rhyme. There are numerous examples of repeated run-on lines while the words of the lines begin to be knit together by phonetic syzygy; onomatopœia is now used to good effect and alliteration becomes frequent. This poem is sometimes faulty in narration but it is very dramatic (for example, in the friar's scene) and nobly expressed.

The trippingly musical song for the "Jacquerie" (p. 204—

² Page refers to Scribner's Edition of Lanier's Poems, and the date to the year in which the poem was written.

1868) is written in three-rhythm with the accent on the first note of the bar. Note that the third line is not the classic dactyl, which would be a four-rhythm, but is still a three-rhythm.

The other song for the "Jacquerie" (p. 206—1868) is choral and symbolic, but not altogether successful.

The "Betrayal" (p. 205—1868), iambic, of four bars with cæsure after the second bar, is very rhythmical and musical. In the "Golden Wedding" (p. 207—1868) there are the following bad rhymes—have: brave, heaven: given, but the poem is graceful and well-worded.

The unclear but pleading "Ship of the Earth" (p. 89—1868); the sad, despairing "Tyranny" (p. 93—1868); the poem "Life and Song" (p. 94—1868), with its beautiful climax. present no special peculiarities. "Baby Charley" (p. 214—1869) is a beautifully tender and simple poem. In "Nirvâna" (p. 210—1869) the liquid sounds prevail, giving to this yearning melody a peculiar smoothness, while the same smoothness due to liquids and sibilants aided by alternate rhyme is present in "Resurrection" (p. 221—1868). The somewhat daring poem to "Nilsson" (p. 217—1871) and the unpraiseworthy poem to "Huntingdon's Miranda" (p. 107—1874) still preserve the characteristic three-rhythm (bad rhymes—rare: hair and flare: air). In 1874 Lanier wrote his poem "Corn," which, when published the following year, caused much comment and won for its author much praise. I presume that it is in allusion to this that Mr. Stedman classes it among Lanier's overpraised ventures. The poem opens with a poetic description of summer; attention is then drawn specifically to the "stolid vehemence" of the contest between the corn—the sign of culture, and the sassafras and brambles—signs of carelessness and neglect. Then one tall corn-captain typifies the poet in his rôle of leader (vid. p. 45), his growth from beneath and above. The figure then changes and he sings of corn as the

"(O) Steadfast dweller on the selfsame spot
Where thou wast born, that still repinest not—
Type of the home-fond heart, the happy lot"!

This emblem of contentment is then contrasted with the old deserted Georgian hills,

"By restless-hearted children left to lie
Untended there beneath the heedless sky,
As barbarous folk expose their old to die."

The desertion of these old fields is then explained by the example of one

"Who sowed his heart with hopes of swifter gain,
Scorning the slow reward of patient grain.

The spirit of gambling in cotton led to disaster and eventual ruin. The poem ends with a bow of promise.

The movement of the poem is, in type, iambic, of five bars, but the metre is irregular. The rhyme is at first in triplets, later in couplets and then without fixed order. The rhymes bright : opposite, fall : whimsical are to be noted. The poem abounds in alliteration and phonetic syzygy ; liquids and sibilants are freely used. In spite of the commonplace theme and an even more commonplace application in the latter part, the poem seems to me not only full of thought and fine feeling, but no less full of poetical parts and impressive lines. The poem lacks artistic unity and it is truth, but not what Arnold in Aristotle's term would call "high truth."

It was at the suggestion of Bayard Taylor and on account of the poem "Corn," which had attracted such favorable notice, that Lanier was selected to write the Centennial Cantata, for which Dudley Buck was to write the music. The selection of Lanier for this task was his first general introduction to the larger number of Americans, and naturally they were inclined to judge him by the result. Lanier thoroughly versed in the fundamental principles of music as well as in the details of technique, counter-point, thorough-bass, etc., wrote not only as a poet but as a musician. Of it he wrote to a friend :

"Necessarily I had to think out the musical conceptions as well as the poem, and I have briefly indicated these along the margin of each movement. I have tried to make the whole as simple and as candid as a melody of Beethoven's ; at the same time expressing the largest ideas possible, and expressing them in such a way as could not be offensive to any modern soul, etc."

To him, musician and poet as he was, the music and words must be complementary, but unfortunately the words were published in advance of the music. The result was disastrous. It was abundantly ridiculed, but generally in good nature. But the criticism, the very nature of the criticism pained the delicate soul of the artist, who felt how little he had been understood and how utterly misjudged.

He was not embittered, however, and he writes in May, 1876, to his father :

" My experience in the varying judgments given about poetry has all converged upon one solitary principle, and the experience of the artist in all ages is reported by history to be of precisely the same direction. That principle is, that the artist shall put forth, humbly and lovingly, and without bitterness against opposition, the very best and highest that is within him, utterly regardless of contemporary criticism. What possible claim can contemporary criticism set up to respect—that criticism which crucified Jesus Christ, stoned Stephen, hooted Paul for a mad-man, tried Luther for a criminal, tortured Galileo, bound Columbus in chains, drove Dante into a hell of exile, made Shakespeare write the sonnet, ' When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,' gave Milton five pounds for *Paradise Lost*, kept Samuel Johnson cooling his heels on Lord Chesterfield's doorstep, reviled Shelley as an unclean dog, killed Keats, cracked jokes on Glück, Schubert, Beethoven, Berlioz and Wagner, and committed so many other impious follies and stupidities that a thousand letters like this could not suffice even to catalogue them."

It would be needless to criticise the poem without the music, for it was never intended for a separated existence and with the music it was, I learn, successful. The years 1874, 1875, 1876 were very rich in poems from Lanier, varying in merit from unsuccessful ventures to a rarely equalled artistic perfection. Of the latter class was "*My Springs*" (p. 71—1874), a beautiful lover-like tribute to his wife's eyes. The poem is full of tender feeling, and the grace with which the poem is bound together by answering letters and related consonants is worthy of great praise. Scarcely less satisfactory is the poem "*In Absence*" (p. 74—1874) the theme of which is Love and the form four English sonnets. Less poetical than this is "*Acknowledgment*" (p. 76—1874-75), which has the same form and a kindred theme. "*Laus Mariae*" (p. 80—1874-75), another English or illegitimate sonnet, cannot be pronounced very successful. "*Rose Morals*" (p. 52—1875) is poetical but indistinct, while "*To — with a Rose*" (p. 107—1876) is very dainty both in sentiment and verse effect. The imperfect rhyme say : pay : day, is not to be commended.

The irregular sonnet, consisting of three rhyming quatrains followed by a rhyme-couplet, dedicated to "*Charlotte Cushman*" (p. 44—1875) is not strong, while the over-drawn tribute to the same actress in the poem "*At First*" (p. 139—1876) is also

uneven in metre.—Of peculiar interest is the poem "Special Pleading" (p. 81—1875) because the author of it says:

"In this little song I have begun to dare to give myself some freedom in my own peculiar style, and have allowed myself to treat words, similes, and metres with such freedom as I desired. The result convinces me that I can do so now safely."

The result is not so convincing to others. By freedom in the use of words he meant no doubt such compounds as 'heart-break,' 'times-to-come,' 'Now-time,' 'Lonesome-tree' 'dusk-modestly,' 'star-consummate,' 'rose-complete,' 'dusk-time.' By freedom in similes such as the following:

"Poor Now-time sits in The Lonesome-tree
And broods as gray as any dove, etc."

"When Day and Night as rhyme and rhyme
Set lip to lip dusk-modestly, etc."

Indeed all the similes are indistinct, and almost impossible to realize in pictures.—The movement is iambic, but the time is somewhat irregular or equalized by pauses, insertion of extra short syllables, etc. The whole poem shows a freedom, that limited by good taste and a sensitive ear, as Lanier generally curbed license, could lead to admirable results, but left uncurbed or unregulated, as here, detracted greatly from the poem. The sentiment is too unclear to be strong.

The long poem "Symphony" (p. 60—1875) is in all essential respects more artistic and its defects are of a different nature. The *motif* of the symphony is Love. It opens with three rhythm, of four bars with cæsural pause. The violins said "we'er all for love" and all stringed instruments range themselves on the side of the violins in a protest against the heartlessness of trade. The description changes to iambic fives, then back to fours, and the flute sings in irregular iambic metre. The flute song is somewhat long, and monotonous in the luxuriance of unleashed imagination, but it is always tuneful and earnest. Its theme is universal love and with its keynote, "I'm for heart," it sings the shameless manner of trade. The melting clarionet breathes with tearful pleading the story of mercenary love and sets the standard of the knight's devoirs. In measure suited to its task, the knightly horn defends time-honored chivalry. The rich round vowels which abound in this horn song breathe into it a soaring soulfulness, while the refrain "Fair Lady" is a note of

graceful contrast. The verse is a four-lined iambic measure, three lines having four bars and the fourth line three, and then the refrain, "Fair Lady." This song is one of the prettiest pleas for purity yet written in English verse. The *haut-boy* with the innocence and candor of childhood teaches the outcome of love in humility, while the ancient bassoons chant rhythmic runes. Then the symphony is interpreted as the fugue of life wherein the ever-recurring theme is love, recurring so oft that love becomes music and

"Music is Love in search of a word."

This poem shows, perhaps, a greater freedom than the poem "Special Pleading" but it is a wiser freedom, a freedom conscious of itself and well in hand. Only in the flute song is there confusion and then it is the multitudinous music of unnumbered flute notes. This seems to me the most successful of Lanier's long poems. It is rich in thought and word, surpassingly musical in method and with the unity of a masterly composition. Lanier's two talents are here indissolubly interwoven.

The next long poem "Psalm of the West" (p. 114—1876), bolder in design and more difficult in conception, lends itself to very easy division into separate parts. In fact it is far more a number of related pictures placed near each other than one picture with many parts. The poem opens with a tableau in which the West represents Eden, America is the tall Adam of lands and lithe Freedom is his Eve. Then follows a eulogy of Freedom. In form a more complex three-time rhythm, the most striking peculiarity is the internal rhyme such as, hail: bewail; will's high adoring: ill's low exploring; stream of the light: dream of the night, etc.

In the description of the flight of a soul, the shuttle of poetic words flies so rapidly that plan and purpose are lost in the woof of musical sounds. In vain the mind tries to catch and keep the rapid pace struck by the poet's fancy. Wearied at last, it draws a despairing breath and soothes itself with the echoes of the poem's music. Yet even the music seems artificial: alliteration is conscious and overdone; words of sweet sounds are often repeated; the soft *s*'s lend a charm that is heightened by consonants that answer each other's pleasing tones. In ballad form follows a confused description of the Norseman's coming, and the chain of stanzas is connected by lines too often

"brambled-tangled in a brilliant maze." Here, too, however there are some lines of irresistible beauty. Columbus speaks, and in legitimate sonnets with variations in the minor portion, narrates the story of his trials. This narration is in dramatic effect in the best manner of the "Jacquerie." Again we note the beauty of the words.

The "Mayflower's Coming" is measuredly total in trochaic rhythm of four bars. Four stanzas of ten lines each, and one of fourteen lines, complete this picture; then with rapid iambic measure the first battle for freedom is depicted. Following this is the declaration of independence and the wars with England. The prelude to the civil war unfolds itself in modulated trochees. In six quatrains the story of the war is written down, and the refrain strikes a keynote of perfect reconciliation. The Land then counts his flock of years and reads in brief line the tale of his century of life. Nine six-lined stanzas, filled with prophecies of the young Adam's manliness, end the poem. In continuity it stretches from a remote past to an unknown future, but the poem is not an organic whole and it leaves no idea of completeness. In spite of the beautiful lines, the quotable phrases, and the well-told stories, it remains as evidence of our author's failure to write as *aus einem Guss*—with one moulding. The poem is strong in its parts but, like the young Adam it describes, it lacks equal and rounded development.

I confess that I feel a pleasure in turning from this effort to interpret a nation's life, to the "Waving of the Corn" (p. 23—1876) wherein nature's life is so beautifully interpreted. This poem is particularly happy in the lines in which, not inferences but facts, are simply and unaffectedly recorded.

"Clover" (p. 19—1876) is our author's first complete poem in heroic blank verse. There is a great preponderance of run-on lines, while syzygy is of more frequent use than alliteration, though the latter is often used. The poem opens with a landscape in which the commonplace figures in the foreground are not wanting, and then becomes symbolic. The cousin clover stands for kindred spirits of the author, whom he recalls by name. The patient grazing ox is made the image of the Course-of-Things destroying all the great of earth. Forced to moralize on the meaning of this vision he writes:

"God's clover we, and feed His Course-of-Things
 The pasture is God's pasture ; systems strange
 Of food and filrement He hath, whereby
 The general brawn is built for plans of His
 To quality precise ; Kinsman, learn this :
 The artist's market is the heart of man
 The artist's price some little good of man.
 Tease not thy vision with vain search for ends.
 The End of Means is art that works by love.
 The End of Ends . . . in God's Beginning's lost."

In the year following (that is, 1877) Lanier was seeking relief from suffering by whiling away his time in Florida and Georgia. From his experiences we have several additional examples of how much he saw in nature. "From the Flats" (p. 26—1877) is a song of three eight-lined stanzas rhyming in couplets. It is a monotone chant, well representing the dull, dead sameness of the scenery of Flats. In pleasing contrast with this is the "Tampa Robins" (p. 28—1877), a gaily colored grove painting with "sunlight song and orange blossoms" in profusion. Its spirit, as its coloring, is bright and hopeful. The "Stirrup-Cup" (p. 45—1887) to death is resigned and almost joyous in the prospect of the poet's release from suffering. The "Mocking Bird" (p. 27—1877), a legitimate sonnet, is poetic in thought but restrained and formal in expression. Freer far in movement, and far more irregular in metre, is the graceful and suggestive poem, the "Bee" (p. 83—1877). In the music of this poem and in the masterly use of alliteration and syzygy, this poem is an adequate prelude, if not a fair companion piece to one of the most musical of English poems, the "Song of the Chattahooche" (p. 149—1877). The music of a song easily eludes all analysis and may be dissipated by a critic's breath, but let us try to catch the means by which the effect is in part produced. In five stanzas of ten lines each, alliteration occurs in all save twelve lines. In eleven of these twelve lines internal rhyme occurs, sometimes joining the parts of a line, sometimes uniting successive lines. Syzygy is used for the same purpose. Of the letters occurring in the poem about one-fifth are liquids and about one-twelfth are sibilants. The effect of the whole is musical beyond description. It sings itself and yet nowhere sacrifices the thought. Poe's "Ulalume" and Tennyson's "Brook," or whatever other poem you may choose with which to compare this highest achieve-

ment of our artist's musical art, will find in this a fair and unyielding competitor. In all the range of English song I know nothing more worthy of comparison with it than Buchanan Read's "Bay of Naples," and the measure of the difference in merit is the difference between the rapid leap and fall of babbling brook, and the blue inlets and crystal creeks of a gently, billowing bay.

With iambics of five bars, with alternating rhyme, a "Florida Sunday" (p. 143—1877) reflects in its measure and its meaning the peaceful, quiet, God-reliant soul of the author. The "Dove" (p. 105—1877) is rich in charming sound-effects and is in spirit sad, plaintive and melodiously mournful.—In the narrative in quatrains entitled "Hard Times in Elfland" (p. 152—1877), we have an apt picture of earth's methods transferred to the spirit land. It is impossible not to note the abominable rhyme, bar for her: barrier. The tribute to "Richard Wagner" (p. 95—1877) is itself Wagnerian in its earth-confusion resolved into the harmonies of music. The poem is intricate and indistinct. Wagner is taken as the representative of his times.

Perhaps there is nothing stronger or more dramatic in the whole volume of poems than the ballad, the "Revenge of Hamish" (p. 33—1878), in which regularity of accent gives place more and more to time as the true basis of metre. In this we have not only run-on lines but also run-on verses. The rhythm is four-time; not as usual the three rhythm. In beautiful contrast to the picture of despair in this poem is the dainty little "Song of the Future" (p. 50—1878). Song is represented as the dove from the ark of hope. The "Harlequin of Dreams" (p. 85—1878) is a thoroughly successful legitimate sonnet, in which the balance between major and minor portion is well preserved. The three legitimate sonnets "To our Mocking Birds" (p. 104—1878) is very suggestive in its interpretation of nature. The theme of love is very skillfully introduced in the poem, "How Love Looked For Hell" (p. 89—1878-79). Sense finds hell in space, mind finds hell in the heart, but wherever love comes there is no hell, hence love can find it nowhere. The construction of the verse is six-lined stanzas with changing refrain. In more conventional iambics Taylor's freedom is contrasted with Lanier's embarrassments in the lines to "Bayard Taylor" (p. 39—1879). The poem is filled with deep soul yearning. To the

"Hymns of the Marshes" belong the three: "Individuality," "At Sunset" and the "Marshes of Glynn." Of these "Individuality," (p. 10—1878-79) exhibits a growing boldness in run-on lines, which now become run-on stanzas; the theme is the artist's freedom as contrasted with the cloud's lack of will. "At Sunset," (p. 13—1779-80) is original in rhyme order and poetical in effect but it lacks distinctness of meaning. The "Marshes of Glynn" (p. 141-1878) is extremely beautiful, filled as it is with soft sounds. Alliteration is very frequent while the verse structure becomes more and more free and is clearly based on time. This poem is marked by a peculiar grace and prettiness.

The plea of the soul for freedom from the thrall of opinion is strongly presented in the poem "Remonstrance" (86—1878-79). The mental mark of this is intense earnestness and force, which is supplemented by the resignation and charity in the beautiful poem "Opposition" (p. 57—1879-80). Here the charms are the hopefulness of tone and the simple grace of form. Alliteration is abundant but not strained.—The "Ode to Johns Hopkins University" (p. 108-1880) seems sincere in sentiment, but trammelled and perfunctory in manner. The winsomeness of the simple verses in "Ireland" (p. 148-1880) and the exquisite tenderness of "A Ballad of Trees and the Master" (p. 141-1880) deserve cordial praise.—The "Owl against Robin" (p. 47-1880) is not particularly inspiring, but it contains a large number of Lanier's characteristic charms of manner—frequent and skillful use of alliteration, lavish use of rhyme both end and internal.—The keen and incisive criticism, the progressive thought, the lofty conception of Christ make the "Crystal" (p. 29) one of the most instructive and inspiring of our poet's efforts. The form is blank verse and the characteristic letters are sibilants.—The swan-song of our poet is "Sunrise" (p. 3—1880). Save one rhymed note of thanks, it is the last poetic utterance of our bard. Written when he was too feeble to lift his food to his mouth and during a fever temperature of one hundred and four it is a world-marvel. It is a fitting climax of a progressive genius, not that it represents the best that he wrote, or that it suggests the limit of his art, but in that it shows a clearer conception than ever of quantity as the basis of verse and an unreserved allegiance to this theory. The poem too is climacteric, ending in his triumphant death note already quoted.

D. Lanier in the 'Science of English Versification' after discussing the four possible sound-relations, duration, intensity, pitch and tone-color, shows that only three exact co-ordinations are possible; namely, duration, pitch and tone-color, or their effects, rhythm, time, and color. He then points out that music and verse differ only in the means by which the co-ordination of rhythm, time and tone-color are made, namely in the case of music by *musical sounds* and in the case of verse by *spoken words*. Rhythm is then discussed, the principle of accent as the basis of rhythm is discarded and time is postulated and defended as the essential basis. This established, the quantity of a syllable, the grouping of sounds into bars, as units of measure, and the broader grouping by phrases, by lines or metres, by stanzas and by poems are treated fully. The phrase grouping may be effected in various ways, for instance, by logical pause, by alliteration, by logical accent, etc.

The essential difference of Lanier's theory from that generally received is this; that rhythm in verse is precisely the same as rhythm in music and that rhythm in music consists of exact time relations among sounds and silences. Hence the office of accent cannot begin until rhythm is established, and then its office is limited simply to grouping into bars. But both bars and accents are unessential to verse. Rhythmic pronunciation and logical accents must not be confounded. Using the musical notation, the author shows that bars contain a given number of notes of a fixed length. In making out the proper number of units of time, absence of sounds must be supplied by pauses of definite length. The bar may contain any number of units of time in theory but practically, rhythm containing three units or three rhythm, and rhythm containing four units or four rhythm, are the ones occurring, and of these the three rhythm is by far the most popular in English.

This is enough of Lanier's theory to reveal how much more freedom the poet here gains than he could ever have, if he must provide for an ever recurring accent at given intervals. Indeed with rests and short syllables not only is there a liberty in words, but a liberty that may have no other limitations than the capacity of the human ear to comprehend or co-ordinate the grouping of sounds. As we have seen, Lanier's poems preserving as they do, almost universally the beloved three rhythm, illustrate, particu-

larly in his later days, full recognition of the time element and an utter disregard of fitting lines for mechanical scansion. The theory in its application seems to have all the flexibility of the sister art of music and to leave the poet utterly untrammelled, responsible to his own genius alone, and to be judged only by his power of making himself understood in song. But bringing verse and music so close together, he did not hesitate to bring them closer by calling attention to the prevalence and universal tacit recognition of tune in ordinary speech.

"Once we get a fair command of all these subtle resources of speech-tunes", he writes, "once we have trained our ears to recognize and appreciate them properly, once we have learned to use them in combination with the larger rhythm, which are easily within the compass of our English tongue, what strides may we not take towards that goal, of the complete expression of all the complex needs or hopes or despairs of modern life—which ever glitters through the clouds of commonplace before the eyes of the fervent artist!"

Our artist died too young to have finished the scientific experiments with reference to speech-tunes, too early to have mastered the details of a problem he had set himself to solve. But how plainly do we see in some of his finer poems the singular harmony between the thought and its dress. The discriminating ear and unfaltering purpose might have taught us plainer lessons of this organic union of word and music. No poet seems to have recognized more fully the colors of verse and how the colors were to be attained. Other poets may have succeeded almost or fully as well in producing the effects, but Lanier examined the reasons and used the means with clear purpose. In his opinion the music of poetry, or rather poetry as music, could use and must use all available means to impart to itself the true and desired color of tones. Rhyme wherever occurring, the judicious and pleasing arrangement of sonorous vowels, the selection of consonants that would lend the quality appropriate to the theme, that would not clog with awkward combinations of letters the easy flow of vocables, the union of parts of lines by similarity of initial sounds—all these were not for him accidental phenomena but the essential attributes of color—effects in word painting. We saw repeatedly how frequently and with what skill our author illustrated his theory. Special attention is due to the harmonious effect, the charming beauty imparted to

Lanier's poems by that happy faculty with which he linked words together by recurring consonants. This differs from alliteration, in that the consonant in question need not be initial.

For the musical composer of English verse there seem to be no clogs of established form or fixed principles, in this far-reaching and suggestive theory of verse. Let him find the tune with all its accompaniments of appropriate color and suit it to a typical rhythm and naught but his own power and taste, naught but his hearer's capacity and ear stand in the way of a perfect poem. To overcome these difficulties are, however, present tasks of sufficient gravity to command the attention of the poetic mind. The dangers, however, are as potent as the possibility of achievement is clear.

First, until our ear is trained to catch the subtleties of these rhythmic forms, or until the poet reads full well the power of his hearer, elaborate form may seem but formlessness. This formlessness, which I think I discover in several places in Lanier's poems, is due in every case, I believe, to the exactions of his musical conception. He had no sympathy with that formlessness which is the "lawlessness of art." His formlessness was that of a composer, the music of whose soul cannot be forced into a formal score or rendered on the ordinary instrument of language.

The second danger is a tendency to strain for form effects and leave the substance unexpressed. If I mistake not this fault is present, too, in our author. Yet he had no sympathy with that perfection of form, wherein no substance is found. Lanier was a poet as well as an artist, and if at times his artistic temperament seemed to eclipse his poetic thought, grant that to the poet mind the very manner of expression may indicate the thought that lies beneath, while to the duller ear the thought must come in completed form.

These two seem to me to be the faults natural to Lanier's theory, and faults which he did not escape. Other faults are present, too. Stedman says

"That Lanier's difficulties were explained by the very traits which made his genius unique. His musical faculty was compulsive. It inclined him to override Lessing's law of the distinctions of art and to essay in language feats that only the gamut can render possible."

To Stedman then his poems often seem nebulous, mere recitative; he fails to make his impressions, sometimes even his outlines clear, but his chief mistake was that of wandering along in improvisation like some facile dreamy master of the keyboard. Some book-reviewer in the Boston Advertiser says of his poetry: "much of it is hard to read and not easy to understand. It lacks simplicity. The poet has tried to express too much and his luxuriant imagination sometimes hides his meaning."

I believe that these charges must stand unanswered, but I would read over against them these merits of his verse that seem to supplement his faults. It is true that his musical faculty made him attempt that which as yet seems impossible for poetry, but his attempts to remove this impossibility and to clothe his thoughts in a garb of music, gave us such poems as "Tampa Robins," the "Mocking Bird," the "Song of the Chattahoochee." This same keen appreciation of thought and word in music wedded, make him in numerous passages like Chaucer or Keats in his "divine fluidity of diction," like Swinburne in his picturing words: like Ruskin in his artistic finish; like Milton in his rhythmic movement. We must acknowledge that parts of some of his poems do sometimes seem the ready utterance of an unrestrained imagination, but these very parts impress us with the richness, the luxuriance of an imagination that sometimes tangles thought in a net work of ideas. True, he does seem to improvise, but this proves him far more than a mere skilful artisan in metre and rhyme. It shows the natural utterance of his overfull soul—the spontaneity of his poet-spirit. We must bear in mind that Lanier complained, and complained earnestly, "that in poetry criticism was without a scientific basis for even the most elementary of its judgments"; that Lanier, who conceived his art as a divine gift and knew no higher aim than the pursuit of truth, set to work to seek the foundation and the laws of versification. We have seen the results of these investigations. He had adopted as one of the mottoes of his book these words of Dante: "But the best conceptions can not be save where science and genius are." He believed in his own genius, he was now confident that he had mastered the science. His fidelity to truth left him no alternative. He must apply it. Lanier's mistake, I believe with Stedman, was his attempt to illustrate laws. He was sometimes under the sway of a theory,

when he might have been free ; he was now and then constrained when he might have been natural. Perhaps this was didacticism, as Stedman suggests, but Lanier seems to me to be didactic in another sense. The poet becomes too often an avowed teacher of morals—the sermons were no less valuable because in pleasing verse, but the poetry was too often burdened with the lesson it must teach. The moral purpose is not only inferred but it too often proclaimed itself.

The quality that ranks Lanier by the side of the great poets is his "high sense of beauty." His loftiness of mind, the serenity of his soul, the high aim of his living, his deep and firmly rooted love transmuted the "beauty of holiness" into the "holiness of beauty" and unsealed his eyes so that he recognized this divine stamp of beauty in creator and creature alike. But if his sense of beauty made him a peer of our great poets, it was the heavenly gift of music that distinguished him from them. Milton, it is true, whom he most resembles in this respect, had a knowledge of music, but not the same passion for it. Milton's music was more a recreation, an accompaniment of reverie ; Lanier's was a fiery zeal, a yearning love, a chosen and adequate form of expression of his soul's deepest feeling. Combined with this passion for music was his technical knowledge of the art, and these combined formed at once the foundation and the framework of his poetry. He seems literally to have sung his poems, they are essentially musical, tuneful, and melodious. Surcharged with music he overflows in mellifluous numbers. Here, then, Lanier stands out differentiated in the choir of poets and here we find that distinctive quality which is the very flavor of his writing.

I said above that I believe in Lanier's own words that in soul he was a great poet. I ask again in conclusion, "was he a great poet in utterance?" I answer, yes. Certainly not the greatest because of his limitation of subject-matter and of form. Limitations, it is true, that he might have overcome, but, hampered all his life by a thousand discomforts that would have crushed the spirit of most men, he died too young to have fixed beyond controversy his own place. Stedman, our chief of critics, says that "one now sees clearly that he was a poet and bent on no middle flight." A recent writer calls him one of the most original of American poets. Ward believes that he will take his final rank

with the first princes of American song. He has by merit increased the number of his followers from one patient, confident soul to thousands of willing learners, and in the decade since his death his fame has spread beyond the confines of south, of north, of America and is now heralded by many ardent admirers across the waters. May the circle of his readers continually grow, and the praise of his real admirers be unstifled, for naught but good can come of knowing him, and naught but loftier living can come of loving him.

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ERRATA.

Page 54, l. 1, read "*bramble-tangled*" for "brambled."

" 54, " 7, " *told* for total.

" 55, " 1, insert comma after clover.

" 55, " 3, for *filrement* read *fiberment*.

" 55, " 6, add semicolon at end of line.

" 55, " 18, read *genre* for grove.

" 55, " 21, 1887 should be 1877.

" 56, " 2, insert *in America* after song.

" 56, " 5, add *a* before babbling.

" 56, " 29, dele *the*.